The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 75

Whereas individual charitable giving rates among Americans have stagnated at 1.5 to 2.2 percent of aggregate individual income for the past 50 years;

Whereas a 1 percent increase (from 2 percent to 3 percent) in charitable giving will generate over $90,000,000,000 to charity;

Whereas charitable giving is a significant source of funding for health, education, and welfare programs; and

Whereas a 1 percent increase in charitable giving would provide some of the funds that will allow the nation to meet our health, education and welfare goals. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress encourages all Americans to increase their charitable giving, with the goal of increasing the annual amount of charitable giving in the United States by 1 percent.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the conference report to accompany S. 1281, the NASA authorization bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 1281), to authorize appropriations for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for science, aeronautics, exploration, exploration capabilities, and the Inspector General, and for other purposes, for fiscal years 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010, having met, have agreed that the Senate recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the House and agree to the same with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House Proceedings of the RECORD of December 18, 2005.)

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, last Friday, when I spoke to my colleagues about the NASA authorization bill, the Senate, in the press of other business at the end of the session, was unable to take up the conference report on S. 1281, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005. Since then, the House of Representatives has adopted the report under suspension of the rules, demonstrating wide support for the compromise bill. I am very pleased that the Senate is now poised to approve the conference report as well.

I want to thank my ranking member on the Science and Space Subcommittee, Senator NELSON of Florida, for all his help. Chairman STEVENS and Senator INOUYE were active participants throughout this process, and I certainly appreciate their efforts. Senator LOTT was a key member of the Senate team that has brought us to this point.

My subcommittee staff, Jeff Bingham and Tom Cremins, and Senator NELSON's staff, Jean Toal Eisen and Chan Lieu, work so well together and have done so much to bring us to this point, and I want to say thank you to them.

When President Bush announced a new Vision for Space Exploration in January of 2004, he was not simply describing a new mission for NASA; he was describing a pathway to a future for the next generation. The legislation embodied in this conference report represents a statement by the Congress that the Vision for Space Exploration is the right vision for America in the new age of space. At the same time, the bill provides guidance to help NASA do its part in leading the way along this new path to the future by building effectively on lessons learned and by efficiently using its resources, especially the talent and expertise of its workforce.

S. 1281, as modified by the conference report, provides authorization for NASA funding at $17.9 billion in fiscal year 2007 and $18.7 billion in fiscal year 2008. The conferees believe these levels of funding will ensure the successful return to flight of the space shuttle and the completion of the international space station, as well as continuing the important work in exploration, science, aeronautics and education.

These funding levels also take into account the recently identified shortfall between what the administration had been projecting for shuttle flights and the number of flights needed to complete the international space station, meet our international commitments, and provide an important research capability in space.

I am especially pleased that the conference report provides the designation of the U.S. portion of the space station as national laboratory. This is an important and significant part of the bill. First, it demonstrates that the Congress understands the great value and potential represented by the research that can be done aboard the space station. It underscores the need to ensure that the laboratory is as capable, efficient and well equipped as we can make it. Second, it provides a framework for bringing additional, non-NASA resources to bear in supporting research aboard the space station. This will enable NASA to focus its resources on research needed to support the Vision for Exploration, while continuing to provide space station research opportunities in the broader areas of life sciences and fundamental sciences.

In my previous statement, I mentioned briefly a perfect example of the kind of fundamental research that the space station enables, which was described in a recent hearing before the Commerce Committee. Dr. Sam Ting, of MIT, discussed the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer, scheduled to be attached to the space station. This device takes advantage of the unique space environment to measure—and help understand—the characteristics of matter in the universe. The results of this experiment could revolutionize our knowledge about the interactions of matter and potentially lead, for example, to the development of new, and virtually unlimited, energy sources.

As we move forward with the Vision for Space Exploration, we will need new vehicles and launch capabilities. NASA has made the decision to base those new vehicles on much of the existing capabilities and designs of the space shuttle program. This legislation ratifies that decision and provides the policy foundation to ensure its successful implementation. The evolution of our launch vehicles to a new generation requires that we be especially careful not to undermine our existing capabilities for human space flight. The legislation ensures a smooth transition between the shuttle and the new crew exploration vehicles by providing adequate resources to continue shuttle flights and accelerate CEV development so as to minimize any gap between the two systems. In addition, the legislation specifically directs NASA to make the maximum possible utilization of the personnel, assets, and capabilities of the space shuttle program in developing the next generation of crew and cargo vehicles. The new CEV will be designed with the flexibility to carry out a variety of missions. It will specifically be designed to provide access to the space station, and thus fulfills the role of a crew rescue vehicle, CRV, if needed, to ensure the safety of our crews aboard the international space station.

In order to further facilitate the evolution of current human space flight systems into those needed for the Vision for Exploration, the bill has provided for the merging of the human space fight activities into a single account. This is intended to provide the closest possible interaction between these activities, in those areas where they can be mutually supportive. At the same time, the legislation contains language to ensure that both the exploration activities and the human space flight, or space operations activities, retain sufficient resources to fulfill their core objectives.

Another important and historical NASA research activity is aeronautical research, a fundamental part of NASA's activities since its inception. All of us recognize that the continued health of the Nation's aerospace industry in a very competitive global marketplace makes it essential that we have solid aeronautical research capabilities. This legislation directs the development of a national policy to guide the Nation's aeronautical research—including that conducted by NASA. This policy will enable us to make informed decisions about the future directions for aeronautics research and the necessary resources to support them.

One of the more exciting new developments in space exploration is the expanded level of commercial interest in supporting and expanding space exploration. This legislation encourages those developments. It provides expanded authority for competitive prizes to promote commercial developments, and it encourages the use of commercial services and capabilities in servicing the space station, to cite just two examples. This is clearly an important new development in space exploration which the bill fully endorses.

Finally, let me say something about the broad range of science activities for which NASA has always been known. This conference agreement expresses very clearly the need for maintaining a balanced science portfolio throughout all NASA programs and provides the funding authority necessary to ensure the space sciences, earth sciences, and education activities remain vigorous parts of NASA's mission.

Mr. President, this legislation provides a comprehensive, forward-looking and responsible approach to the transition of our Nation's space exploration programs into a new era of discovery. I believe that, together with our colleagues in the House, we have crafted a congressional consensus that will help ensure this Nation's leadership in space exploration and provide benefits beyond measure and beyond imagination to this Nation and the world.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I urge passage by unanimous consent of the 2005 NASA Authorization Act and managers' package that has been agreed to by conferees from the House and Senate.

I express my thanks for the work that my fellow conferees, the committees, subcommittees, and our staffs have done on this bill. I am confident that it will help Administrator Griffin to lead NASA to accomplish its many missions.

America is a nation of explorers. NASA explores the frontiers of aviation by atmospheric flight; the frontiers of space by going where others have never been; and the frontiers of science by conducting scientific endeavors that broaden our understanding of life, our home planet, and the heavens. NASA has not been authorized by Congress for some time. In fact, the last two times NASA was authorized was 1993 and 2000.

This is the first authorization of NASA in 6 years. NASA must be held accountable to the Congress through the oversight of the agency. With an authorization bill passed only once every 5 to 7 years, the role has defaulted to the Appropriations Committee, which has many other items on its plate. Now with this NASA authorization legislation, hopefully there will be a healthier and more meaningful communication between the agency and the Congress.

The NASA Authorization Act of 2005 will help the Congress to do a better job of performing oversight of NASA. The act is a 3-year bill, authorizing NASA from 2006 through 2008.

Because appropriators have already funded NASA for fiscal year 2006 the authorizing conferees receded to the appropriations bill for that fiscal year. The bill authorizes $17.932 billion for fiscal year 2007 and $18.686 billion for fiscal year 2008, and provides more funding than the President's budget projections.

Like many of our colleagues, Senator HUTCHISON and I believe that recent NASA budget requests have been below the levels required for the agency to perform its various missions effectively. That was made apparent recently when Administrator Griffin testified at a committee hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives, that the space shuttle program will have a $3 billion plus shortfall over the next 5 years. Dr. Griffin's concerns have been echoed by a letter recently provided by several Members of the House to the White House calling for the space shuttle program to be fully funded.

This legislation authorizes NASA to return humans to the Moon, to explore it, and to maintain a human presence on the Moon. Consistent with the President's vision, it also requires using what we learn and develop on the Moon as a stepping-stone to future exploration of Mars.

To carry out these missions, this act requires NASA to develop an implementation plan for the transition from shuttle to crew exploration vehicle, CEV. The plan will help NASA to make a smooth transition from retirement of the space shuttle orbiters to the replacement spacecraft systems. The implementation plan will help make sure that we can keep the skills and the focus that are needed to assure that each space shuttle flight is safe through retirement of the orbiters, and to retain those personnel needed for the CEV and heavy lift cargo spacecraft.

The bill should be helpful for reducing if not eliminating a gap in America's ability to put humans in Earth orbit. The act also directs NASA to plan for and consider a Hubble servicing mission after the second space shuttle return to flight mission has been completed.

This NASA authorization bill calls for utilization of the international space station for basic science as well as exploration science. It is important that we reap the benefits of our multibillion dollar investment in the space station. This act ensures that NASA will maintain a focus on the importance of basic science.

This legislation directs the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel to monitor and measure NASA's improvements to their safety culture, including employees' fear of reprisals for voicing concerns about safety. The bill encourages NASA to more effectively utilize lessons learned and best practices, and to implement cost controls that are more effective for making better use of our taxpayers' money.

This authorization bill addresses NASA aeronautics and America's preeminence in aviation, calling for the President of the United States to pursue a national policy for aeronautics. The Europeans have stated their intent to dominate the airplane market by 2020. It is not in our national interest to let that occur.

The bill includes a limitation on reprogramming funds from space operations, includes the space shuttle and international space station, to exploration systems, and vice versa. This limitation will ensure that no more than 10 percent of shuttle and station funds can be transferred into the exploration systems program to be used for a shortfall in an exploration-related development program. However, it will not limit the exploration systems and space shuttle programs from utilizing the same personnel, equipment, and contract vehicles to continue to safely operate the shuttle while developing the shuttle-derived crew exploration vehicle.

This act gives America the opportunity for implementing the vision for space exploration; renewing our commitment to U.S. civil aviation and NASA aeronautics research; conducting important science activities at NASA; and assuring that America has continuous human access to space.

By passing this legislation, we will continue to strengthen our economy and inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers.

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, I wish to thank Senators HUTCHISON, NELSON, and STEVENS, for their leadership in bringing together the different bills from the Senate and the House. The final product is the result of hard work and compromise. It provides the National Aeronantics and Space Administration, NASA, and the country clear congressional direction on how to proceed with human space exploration, and it emphasizes NASA's invaluable work in science and education.

Human space exploration is a key component of this bill. I am confident that space discovery will continue to excite young minds and, hopefully, inspire them to pursue an education in math and science. The skills and talents they develop will not only help them reach the stars, they will propel American innovation and define our country's future.

At the same time, we must not overlook safety. I applaud Senator NELSON and the other conferees for keeping safety a top priority in this legislation.

In addition, I want to express my appreciation for the conferees' willingness to accommodate my efforts to promote the design and development of new science facilities, such as telescopes through the National Science Foundation, as well as NASA.

NASA plays a strong role in astronomy from the Hubble Telescope to the Keck Outrigger Project in Hawaii. I am

pleased to see that the bill affirms NASA's commitment to astronomy by ensuring that the Hubble will be serviced. It is my hope that Section 616 will also help NASA work with institutions, such as the Mauna Kea Astronomy Education Center, to make the work of world-class scientists accessible to their neighbors and children.

Finally, I would like to thank JEFF BINGHAM, Tom Cremins, Jean Toal Eisen and Chan Lieu of the Commerce Committee staff, and Mike Dodson, a fellow in Senator BILL NELSON's office, for their hard work on this important measure. I understand Mr. Dodson will be leaving at the end of the year. We will miss his counsel and expertise.

I urge the swift adoption of the conference report.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, my fellow Senators, I am pleased to join Senators HUTCHISON, STEVENS, INOUYE, and LOTT today in presenting the 2005 NASA Authorization Act and managers' package that has been agreed to by conferees from the House and Senate.

I express my thanks for the work that my fellow conferees, the committees, subcommittees, and our staffs have done on this bill. I am confident that it will help Administrator Griffin to lead NASA to accomplish its many missions.

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Congress needs to authorize NASA more often. When NASA is authorized infrequently, then oversight may become lax. The lack of an authorization bill leaves the authorizing function to the Appropriators—and they don't have time and it's not their job. In fact, the lack of oversight provided by authorizers over the last several years may have contributed to the loss of the Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

The NASA Authorization Act of 2005 will help the Congress to do a better job of performing oversight of NASA. The act is a 3-year bill, authorizing NASA from 2006 through 2008. It authorizes NASA appropriations for fiscal year 2007 and 2008.

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This act gives America the opportunity for implementing the Vision for Space Exploration; renewing our commitment to U.S. civil aviation and NASA aeronautics research; conducting important science activities at NASA; and assuring that America has continuous human access to space.

By passing this legislation, we will continue to strengthen our economy and inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The conference report was agreed to.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this is the NASA authorization bill.

I congratulate Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON for this particular piece of legislation, because as we look to the future, science and the technology, and the importance and significance of this legislation stands out.

A few minutes ago, I was talking about SMART grants—these math, education, science, and engineering grants which are being given to juniors and seniors in college. This marries with that beautifully in terms of making sure that we have a strong technology base in terms of jobs and competitiveness.

I congratulate our distinguished colleague from Texas, Senator HUTCHISON, for her leadership on this bill.

TECHNICAL CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF S. 1281

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to H. Con. Res. 324 which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (H. Con. Res. 324) directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a technical correction in the enrollment of S. 1281.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 324) was agreed to.